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UM Observes Rape and Sexual Assault Awareness Week Earlier This Year

The University of Maine's annual Rape and Sexual Assault Awareness week opens Sept. 16, almost a month earlier than in past years, in an effort to provide information and education at a crucial time for first-year students.

According to Ruth Lockhart, UM health educator and co-chair of the UM Rape and Sexual Assault Awareness Program Committee, nationwide studies indicate that most incidents of acquaintance rape occur in the first semester of a first-year student's experience on campus.

Lectures, discussions, films and information tables will all be part of this year's observance. Highlights of the week include keynote addresses Sept. 16 by Bob Hall, founder and president of Learning to Live With Conflict Inc., and the United Against Rape March Sept. 19.

The University of Maine will also be

the site of a conference Sept. 16 for high school and college personnel, "Rape and Sexual Assault Among Students: Creating Awareness, Reducing the Risks." Designed for guidance counselors, superintendents, deans, health center and student services personnel, and other educational system staff who work with students, the conference has a goal to increase the number of educational programs available to high school and college students across the state. The conference is sponsored by UM's Rape and Sexual Assault Awareness Program and the Maine Coalition Against Rape.

A complete listing of all the events scheduled Sept. 16-20 for Rape and Sexual Assault Awareness Week is included in the *Maine Perspective* Calendar, pages 8-10. ▲



UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT
AWARENESS WEEK

Stark statistics on rape and sexual assault emphasize the need for educational and preventative programs not only in the nation's colleges and universities, but also for younger students. The following statistics, compiled from research and studies conducted nationally and in Maine, are provided by the University of Maine Rape and Sexual Assault Awareness Program Committee:

- Sex crimes have been reported against victims ages 2 months to 93 years old.
- Sex crimes are increasing at a faster rate than any other crime.
- Sexual assault is the most under-reported crime in Maine and the nation.
- One out of four girls, and one out of five boys, will be sexually abused before age 18.
- An estimated 75 percent of victims of sexual assault in Maine know their assailant.
- A forcible rape occurs every 46 hours in Maine.
- Those at highest risk of being victims of acquaintance and date rape are women just graduated from high school or in their first semester of college.
- Three-quarters of women raped are age 15-21.

Members of the University Community:

In keeping with the University's commitment to provide a living and learning environment free from sexual harassment, I am designating September 16-20, 1991 as "Rape and Sexual Assault Awareness Week" at the University of Maine. The University of Maine Rape and Sexual Assault Awareness Program Committee has planned a series of events throughout the week to highlight acquaintance rape and sexual assault education and prevention.

Of particular interest to faculty, staff and students will be Bob Hall's keynote address: "Hands Off! Let's Talk!" scheduled for September 16 in the Damn Yankee, Memorial Union, at 7 p.m. Mr. Hall is the founder of Learning to Live With Conflict Inc., and is nationally known on college campuses for his educational presentations on acquaintance rape. His address promotes communication among men and women about sexuality, dating and violence - subjects that college students frequently find difficult to discuss. This event is free and open to the public. There will be other presentations, displays and events throughout the week designed to heighten awareness of acquaintance rape and sexual assault issues, and to promote the prevention of these crimes on our campus.

Please support this campuswide effort by personally participating in these events, by discussing the problems of acquaintance rape and sexual assault with students, and by encouraging their participation in the week's activities.